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The action of the Ejido Commission of the town reveals the knowledge of how to manipulate political and economic power. By sending the 200-peso bribe, they were able to block the independence movement before the leadership had arrived. The extreme tactics used by the independence leaders in killing their opponents approximates the kind of political homicide characteristic of the central plateau (Friedrich 1962). The Indians of the center have been able to maintain their ejido grants intact. However, the political discrimination against residents of both colonias and barrios—no resident of either (except for the Huistecan mentioned above) has been elected president, and they never serve in any post higher than that of assistant judge—will undoubtedly lead to further unrest as the populations expand.

Bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption minimize the potential effectiveness of the ejido organization at local, state, and national levels. Projects undertaken by the national government lose their effectiveness when they are promoted by fraudulent claims, taking advantage of the presumed illiteracy and ignorance of the peasantry. The following case illustrates both the tactics of the ejido agents and the countertactics of the local Indians, resulting in a stalemate in the development projects planned and projected at the national level.

In August, two years ago, the Ejido Bank agents came to town with an offer to lend money on crops. We didn't want to borrow it, but Francisco, carbrón! [*then president of the town*], *said we should do it. "Good," we said. We accepted their terms. They said, "We will give fertilizer. It won't cost you a cent. We have tried it. It will give a good crop. We will give you money every six months, and you will pay the interest of nine percent. We will pay for all the costs. It won't cost you anything for the fertilizer."*

In six months, when the bank agents came to get the interest, they charged us six hundred pesos for the fertilizer. We did not want to receive the second load of fertilizer. We presented our case to the Jefe *and told him, "Why did you say it would not cost anything?" He replied, "No,* muchacho [*boy*], *I told you* [*using the familiar form* te dije] *that the fertilizer is going to cost."*

We used seven bags of fertilizer on each hectare for which they charged

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us 65 pesos per bag. It was the first time we had used it and we had very good crops. We got together and decided not to pay for the fertilizer. We called the bank agents and requested that we be relieved of the charge because the crops had failed. We showed him a milpa which is a low plot that is too wet for a good crop. We just throw the seed there, but don't work on it because it isn't worth the trouble.

We went to a lawyer in Tuxtla. He told us the bank would have to pay for the fertilizer since they had promised it. The lawyer is the helper of the campesinos [*poor farmers*].

Several points of significance can be noted in this case: (1) the Indians are reluctant to take credit risks because of unfortunate experiences in the past; (2) they react to deception with their own deceptions, showing the engineer the land which had not only not been fertilized but had never been weeded or cared for; and (3) they seek professional legal aid in dealing with government agents in order to equalize the contest in which they feel disadvantaged. These first two behavioral syndromes are culturally conditioned responses; the third represents an innovation. By seeking professional aid for which they pay a fee, the Indians are breaking the monopoly of power held by the caciques to whom they were formerly bound in a network of personal obligations incurred in such transactions.

Recent colonization of national lands since the 1950s has introduced a new kind of ejido settlement. Since most of the lands contiguous to settled towns were absorbed in the early days of the ejido grant, movement has been into lands outside the domain of established centers. This spontaneous colonization of unexploited land has followed the penetration of new highways in Quintana Roo, Campeche, Chiapas, Tabasco, and Vera Cruz (de la Peña 1951:348). In defense of their rights to the new lands, the colonists, often of diverse origins, develop a political consciousness. Mestizos and Indians of different towns work together in securing official ejido status for their lands. Acculturation to the national language and ways of life is much greater in these mixed centers than in the settled populations that were part of the original ejido tracts. Consciousness of their rights under national law and independence from traditional loyalties means that these new settlements may be the basis for welding Indians into the na-